

REMARKS

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-9, 15-16, and 21-23 are pending. Claims 10-14 and 17-20 were previously cancelled. Claims 1 and 21 are amended. Claims 1 and 21 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Reasons for Entry of Amendments

At the outset, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered into the Official File in view of the fact that the amendments to the claims automatically place the application in condition for allowance.

In the alternative, if the Examiner does not agree that this application is in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered for the purpose of appeal. This Amendment was not presented at an earlier date in view of the fact that the Examiner has just now presented new grounds for rejection in this Final Office Action.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-9, 15,16, and 21-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over DiBiasse (U.S. 6,928,412), in view of Hoskins et al. (U.S. 6,268,853). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claims 1 and 21

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, each of independent claims 1 and 21 is amended herein to recite a combination of elements directed to apparatus for estimating a manufacturing cost for a product, including *inter alia*

the cost calculation processor being adapted to recalculate the manufacturing cost based on updated cost factor data supplied by one or both of the at least two external suppliers.

Support for the combination of elements set forth in each of claims 1 and 21 can be found in the specification, for example, in paragraphs [0037] to [0040]. See also FIG. 6.

Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of elements as set forth in each of independent claims 1 and 21 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Dibiassé and Hoskins et al.

Except for the split screen as disclosed by Hoskins et al., the Examiner asserts that Dibiassé teaches the presently claimed invention. However, the Office Action merely states that DiBiasse discloses "*Figs. 1-13, a display device, e.g. computing device with a memory for receiving input data concerning physical characteristics of a product to be manufactured at various stages, e.g. claims 1-20, and a plurality of suppliers, e.g. vendors*".

However, the Examiner has provided no support that Dibiassé teaches or suggests each and every limitation of the present invention.

For example, as best understood by the Applicants, nowhere in DiBiasse is there any hint that the DiBiasse apparatus includes the cost calculation processor being adapted to recalculate the manufacturing cost based on updated cost factor data supplied by one or both of the at least two external suppliers, as set forth in independent claims 1 and 21 as amended herein.

The present invention was conceived and reduced to practice in order to accommodate the challenges of an iterative design and iterative cost estimating process involving multiple design changes and multiple initial and updated cost estimates being provided by multiple suppliers. The present invention provides a novel solution to these challenges by providing for the first time a device which simultaneously displays the manufacturing costs or the recalculated manufacturing costs for the one or more stages of design for the at least two of the external suppliers, so that a user can determine which of the multiple suppliers is better at each of the stages of design. With the present invention, a user is able to simultaneously review and compare manufacturing costs of different manufacturers, and to observe simultaneously on one display how these comparative costs change relative to one another, at different design stages and as the different manufacturers update their manufacturing cost data.

The Examiner has provided no evidence that either the cited references, or that which is commonly known in the art, suggests the subject matter set forth in each of independent claims 1 and 21.

At least for the reasons explained above, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of elements as set forth in each of independent claim 1 and 21 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including DiBiasse and Hoskins et al.

Therefore, claims 1 and 21 are in condition for allowance.

All dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, or due to the additional novel features set forth therein.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject claims, but merely to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

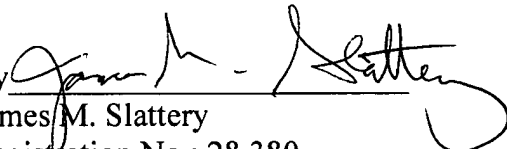
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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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